

### Peter's Denial of the Lord Jesus

#### Mark 14: 66-72

Mark 14:66-72 – *“Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. <sup>67</sup> And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.” <sup>68</sup> But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. <sup>69</sup> And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, “Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.” <sup>71</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” <sup>72</sup> A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And when he thought about it, he wept.”*

#### Background Notes

Peter was warming himself by the fire in the courtyard of the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. Meanwhile, the “religious trial” of our Lord was taking place upstairs where the Sanhedrin, the governing body of the Jews, was gathered.

One of the servant girls recognized Peter and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.” She probably said “Jesus of Nazareth” or “Jesus the Nazarene” with contempt. In those days people from Nazareth were disparaged. They were considered to be rural, rough and unsophisticated, especially when compared to the elite, more sophisticated people of Jerusalem. Remember, before he became a disciple, Nathaniel said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” So the serving girl’s comment was likely a put down.

“You **also** were with Jesus of Nazareth.” Why the also? John was there as well - in fact, it was John who got Peter into the courtyard of the high priest, because John was known to the high priest. John 18:15-18: *“And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also one of this Man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.”*

After Peter denied the Lord he went out onto the porch or entryway, into the shadows, where it was darker. (Remember, it was night.) A little while later *“the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is one of them. But he denied it again.” (Mark 14:69).* Denial #2 followed.

Denial #3 is in verses 70-71: *“And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, ‘Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.’”* The Jews of that day spoke Aramaic, and people from Galilee spoke Aramaic with a noticeably distinctive accent. In our country, you certainly identify the accent of someone who comes from Boston. I grew up in the New York/New Jersey area, and I think you can detect that in my accent. Peter had a Galilean accent, and the people around him detected this.

So Peter denied the Lord a third time - and at that point the rooster crowed the second time. And Peter remembered, and went out and wept.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The heart of man is very deceitful.

Jeremiah 17:9 says: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?”* The Bible certainly teaches this truth, and it’s illustrated here in Peter’s denial. Peter didn’t realize how easily his heart could deceive him. Just a few hours earlier Peter had said to the Lord, *“‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’”* Peter’s heart was so unreliable that he didn’t even remember his dialog with the Lord until the rooster crowed the second time. Notice, in the first two denials Peter denied ever having been with Jesus. In the third denial he denied even *knowing* Jesus. How deceitful the heart can be!

In the third denial, Peter swore and cursed as he denied knowing the Lord. The idea is not blasphemy, but rather telling a lie while under oath. In essence Peter said, “I swear by God Almighty that I do not know this man. May I be cursed if I’m not telling the truth!” Can you imagine Peter making such statements? The heart of man is not reliable.

Now you might think, “I would never do anything like that” - but let’s be careful before we make such self-confident statements. Proverbs says that pride goes before a fall, and Galatians 6:3 says, *“If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”* Our self-confidence can lead to humiliation. Did you ever do or say anything wrong, that you never dreamed that you would ever do or say? Does that ring a bell? The heart of man is deceitful.

### 2. True faith perseveres.

A characteristic of true saving faith is that it perseveres. It hangs on! True faith may be weak, it may falter, it may stumble, it may backslide - but it perseveres! Peter demonstrated this.

There's no doubt that Peter faltered in his faith and trust, but Peter had a genuine faith. Peter bounced back. The Lord restored Peter, and Peter went on to serve the Lord faithfully. He even became a martyr rather than deny his faith. And Peter's return started right here: when that rooster crowed the second time, he remembered - and he wept. The parallel passage in Luke 22:61-62 says: *"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly."* Can you imagine the look that the Lord Jesus gave Peter? What a sorrowful look! What a penetrating gaze! And Peter went out and wept bitterly. This was the start of his comeback.

What a contrast to Judas. Of Judas, Matthew 27:3 says: *"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!'"* Judas acknowledged his sin and showed remorse. But Judas was not saved. He never put His faith and trust in the Lord. Although Peter's faith was weak, and although he backslid and stumbled and faltered, Peter's faith was genuine. And his genuine faith was proved, because Peter persevered in faith to the end of his life. True faith perseveres.

## Practical Applications

### 1. Does our love stand the test of fear?

1 John 4:18 says, *"Perfect love casts out fear."* If Peter had not loved the Lord, he wouldn't have followed Him into the courtyard of the high priest. And we know he loved the Lord because of what the Lord said to him at the time of his restoration. So Peter loved the Lord - but not perfectly. Peter was afraid, and his love did not stand the test of fear. Does our love for the Lord stand the test of fear? Would we be able to go into the arena like the early Christians did, rather than deny their faith in Christ? Would we deny our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ if we were threatened with torture or death? Do you ever wonder how you would react? I think most of us would have to admit we really don't know. But here's some good news. Hebrews 4:16 says that God gives *"grace to help in time of need."* He gives grace to help ***in time of need***. Not when you don't need it, when you need it! Furthermore, *"Perfect love casts out fear."* The more we grow in our love for the Lord, the more we can be sure that our love will stand the test of fear.

### 2. Have you heard the rooster crow lately?

The Lord used a rooster to remind Peter of the commitment he had made - and his failure. Has the Lord ever used something to remind you of your weakness and failure in an area where you *thought* you were committed?

Here's a little illustration. It seems every year it seems that one of my students is a "rooster"! I believe the Lord has called me to teach His Word, and I would like to think I'm really committed to that call. But there's always some student that the Lord uses to test my commitment to teach the Word of God to students. Periodically the rooster crows! A student rubs

me the wrong way, or asks me foolish questions, or in some way forces me to reevaluate my commitment and my attitude. Am I *really* committed to teaching the Word of God to college students? The rooster crows.

Have you heard the rooster crow lately? Has the Lord used a “rooster” to remind you of a commitment you made - but failed to fulfill? You thought you were committed, but the Lord used a “rooster” – a reminder to help you realize that you’re not as committed as you thought, and that some changes need to be made in your life.

Have you heard the rooster crow lately?